









# BREAKING THE BLOCKADE.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF A CONFEDERATE SOLDIER.

His Trials and Tribulations Graphically Depicted—Traveling through the Enemy's Camp.

(Written for the Reason-Under by Samuel Simon.)

I was at Charleston, S. C., in October, 1863, after having served three years in the Confederate army in the triple capacity of fireman, soldier and member of the Ambulance Corps. I deem it necessary to inform the reader that I served nine years in the Volunteer Fire Department at Charleston, which service, under ordinary circumstances, was a total exemption from military duty; but this being an extraordinary occasion, and the fire company that I belonged to having volunteered to join the army, made it almost imperative for all to go, as a single individual, or even a few of them, would not have the moral courage to hold back. The authorities became alarmed, and fearing they would lose their entire fire department, interposed an objection on the ground that it would leave the city unprotected against fire. They stated that they did not wish to interfere with our act of patriotism, but they would oppose any attempt on the part of the Confederate authorities to order us out of the State for military service. This equitable result in our being enrolled as an ambulance corps, with the distinct understanding that whenever it became necessary we could safely count on being called on to perform military duty within the limits of the State.

I can assure the reader that we had our hands full as it was. In the fall of 1863, when the memorable bombardment of Charleston took place, followed by the battles of James and Morris islands, in which we had to participate, and after the battles at both as ambulance corps and nurses in the hospitals. But I digress from my story. I had just finished a three-years' enlistment and received a thirty-days' furlough, with the understanding that I should volunteer at the expiration of that time I should receive a Lieutenant's commission, and if not I would simply be conscripted and sent to the army of Virginia.

My parents resided in New York, and I had heard nothing of them since the establishment of the blockade, and of course had a great desire to see or hear from them, particularly as they depended partly on me for their support. Being totally broken down in health and spirits, and having no money, I decided to make the attempt to do so. In breaking the subject to some friends of mine, I found to my surprise that they were all resolved to leave the country, or at least make the attempt to do so. In breaking the subject to some friends of mine, I found to my surprise that they were all resolved to leave the country, or at least make the attempt to do so.

The trip was very uninteresting and devoid of any incident except that at Weldon, N. C., where the train stopped to allow the passengers to get some refreshments. I was rather anxious to see the passengers and see themselves at the empty dining tables, while the proprietress in the mean time showed a counter across the door to prevent access. We waited patiently for our supper, and when the time was nearly up we were served with cold beefsteak, potatoe, coffee, and baked corn-bread. I was rather hungry, but the food had such an unappealing appearance that I decided to wait until I reached Richmond and there again I was hungry, so rising from the table I sauntered towards the door, requesting the proprietress to move his counter so that I could pass out. He positively declined to do so until

A DOLLAR WAS FORTHCOMING.

He said it made no difference to him whether I had eaten anything or not. I refused to pay from a point of principle, and the passengers siding with me, mine decided to move his counter, and I passed out amidst many cheers. We resumed our journey, and early on the following morning we reached Richmond. We selected quarters at a private boarding-house on the Brick-roads, whose rear yard was a fine garden, and the James river. Here we earnestly, but quietly, set to work to ascertain the easiest way of accomplishing our purpose, and learned that the best method was to obtain passes from General Winder, the Provost Marshal of Richmond. On further inquiry we found that they had ceased issuing them, and that we could not obtain them under any circumstances. This, of course, made us feel somewhat dispirited, as it necessitated a further delay. In the meantime, one of two who were about to run the blockade, a term then generally applied to our undertaking. We put our heads together, and, after much discussion, we decided to make the attempt to obtain one of Gen. Winder's clerks at a cost of \$50 each. We finally decided to do so, and, having everything in our power to do, we were informed there was considerable danger in the application for them. We, however, obtained them and purchased our outfit consisting of heavy boots, pistols, etc. The next move was to get a passport to take us out of Richmond, and we did so by not making a great deal of trouble. We got provisions enough to last us for a couple of weeks as we imagined, and all arrangements being completed, we awaited the arrival. It was on a Saturday night about 10 o'clock, in the beginning of December,

A BITTER COLD NIGHT.

And it rained fearfully, when a covered wagon, such as is used in crossing the Atlantic, drew up to the door of our boarding-house. The driver alighted and informed the landlord that everything was ready and that there was no time to be lost. We bid our landlords a hasty adieu and were off. After riding all night through a driving rain, and with the wind blowing, although under cover. The following morning the sun shone brightly, and about 8 o'clock we reached Pamunkey river. The river was in flood, and the water was so high that it was impossible to cross it. We were stopped by a couple of negroes in possession of a couple of negroes, who were to be in order to intercept their attention. We went on to get across the river, and we were not only successful admirably in that respect, but also in reaching the other side. We were stopped by a couple of negroes in possession of a couple of negroes, who were to be in order to intercept their attention. We went on to get across the river, and we were not only successful admirably in that respect, but also in reaching the other side.

RELIEVE US OF OUR BURDEN, OUR WIVES.

And tobacco, and to help them to live more liberally on our provisions. We closed a bargain with the rascals who had in the meantime arrived, and our party crossed the river in safety, and we were directed by them what route to take in order to reach the Mattaponi. Here our provisions gave out, and to make matters worse we had to be very circumspect in our movements in order to avoid stumbling on to outlying pickets. We finally reached a farm-house, and after considerable haggling, succeeded in getting ten pounds of flour, which was converted into bread in the following manner: A portion of the flour was placed in the glazed cover of a military canteen, and water from the river was added thereto, the stuff was then kneaded, wrapped around a stick and baked over a slow burning brush fire. This was all the food we had until we reached the Mattaponi, which we crossed in safety, and our ferryman directed us on our way to the Rappahannock, which was also crossed on a raft. Nothing of interest occurred except that one of our companions from Charleston made himself very disagreeable by constantly growling at the expense of the trip (which by the way, was becoming more and more heavy), and he threatened that rather than be haled any more he would return to Richmond. We paid no attention to him, and so the matter dropped at that point, and we were directed to a farm-house at Henric, where we

by a man named Hines, who received us in a very hospitable manner, although

WE HAD TO PAY EXCELLENT PRICES.

For every accommodation we had. Here we were obliged to conceal ourselves in a loft for four days, owing to the number of pickets passing the house. On the fifth day Hines bade us get ready, as he was going to guide us to the Potomac. Before starting, however, he admonished us to walk in single file and keep as close as possible. We had proceeded but about a mile from the house when we observed a man rushing across a field towards us, calling out, "Hurry, hurry, hurry!" He seemed to have some heated discussion or dispute about something, and before we could realize what had happened the stranger had drawn a pistol and shot Hines, who without uttering a word, dropped dead at his feet. On our attempting to intercept the murderer he turned and threatened to kill the entire party if we dared to interfere with him. This was indeed, a serious position to be placed in. We stood dumbfounded, not knowing what to do. To give an alarm might lead to our capture, and our danger our lives. To bring the body back home would alter our position, and at best it might raise a suspicion that we were plotting to murder. We decided to leave, and acting on the impulse of the moment, fled across a field and over fences for a distance of about two miles, until we reached another farm-house, the proprietor of which

FOR A CERTAIN CONSIDERATION.

Agreed to take us to Upperville creek on the Potomac. He hastily harnessed a team to an open wagon, we were soon again on our way. The sky looked threatening all morning, but so far it had not rained. We rode along pleasantly for about an hour, when, turning a bend in the road, we were suddenly confronted by two fully armed and equipped cavalry scouts. The one who acted as spokesman was a very gentlemanly looking fellow, and of pleasant address. He ordered the driver to halt, and, doffing his hat in a cavalierly manner, bade us good morning, and, addressing himself to the writer, who happened to be seated next to the driver, he inquired to know whether we were traveling to, I replied that we were on our way to the Potomac. "Have you the proper passes?" was his next inquiry. The answer was in the negative. He then ordered the driver to halt, and, doffing his hat in a cavalierly manner, bade us good morning, and, addressing himself to the writer, who happened to be seated next to the driver, he inquired to know whether we were traveling to, I replied that we were on our way to the Potomac.

THEY HELD A PRIVATE CONFERENCE FOR A FEW

minutes. The result of which was an assessment of \$50 each for the privilege of proceeding. The amount was promptly paid over, and once more we were on our way. This was about 4 o'clock. It started to rain and was getting pretty dark. We rode through a dreary landscape until about 8 o'clock, when we drew up in front of a miserable-looking shanty, through the windows of which we could see a light flickering. When the wagon stopped the driver alighted and took a survey of the place. A large fire-place, in which great logs of wood were burning, made the place look comfortable, as there was little or no furniture in the room, except a few chairs. We were regaled with a drink of applejack (such abominable stuff), and then furnished with a supper consisting of coffee and stale corn-bread, which was eaten with a relish. After supper the Captain informed us that whenever we so desired we could go on in front of the fire and sleep. We were completely worn out with the day's journey. The following morning we awoke very early, and when the Captain awoke he was again

REGALED WITH SOME APPLEJACK.

And served with a moderately good breakfast, after which we started out in front of the house and took a survey of the place. A large fire-place, in which great logs of wood were burning, made the place look comfortable, as there was little or no furniture in the room, except a few chairs. We were regaled with a drink of applejack (such abominable stuff), and then furnished with a supper consisting of coffee and stale corn-bread, which was eaten with a relish. After supper the Captain informed us that whenever we so desired we could go on in front of the fire and sleep. We were completely worn out with the day's journey. The following morning we awoke very early, and when the Captain awoke he was again

THREATENED TO EXTERMINATE THE WHOLE

And do so effectively, too, as not to leave a grease spot to show that we ever existed. The owner of the quilt became alarmed, and fearing the Captain might do something to him, he called out to him, "Hurry, hurry, hurry!" He seemed to have some heated discussion or dispute about something, and before we could realize what had happened the stranger had drawn a pistol and shot Hines, who without uttering a word, dropped dead at his feet. On our attempting to intercept the murderer he turned and threatened to kill the entire party if we dared to interfere with him. This was indeed, a serious position to be placed in. We stood dumbfounded, not knowing what to do. To give an alarm might lead to our capture, and our danger our lives. To bring the body back home would alter our position, and at best it might raise a suspicion that we were plotting to murder. We decided to leave, and acting on the impulse of the moment, fled across a field and over fences for a distance of about two miles, until we reached another farm-house, the proprietor of which

WE SETTLER OUR BILL, WHICH WAS EXOR-

Nor would he allow any baggage to be placed in the boat until a dollar per pound was paid him. At last everything was settled, and by 2 o'clock P. M. we started. The Captain and the negro at the oars. The distance from our starting point to the Maryland shore of the Potomac is nearly sixteen miles. Our boat was flat-bottomed and in a very leaky condition, scarcely large enough for the number it contained. Everything, however, went smoothly on until we reached the Potomac, when, owing to the roughness of the water, the boat began filling rapidly. It was fearfully cold and dark as night, and the cramped position of the boat, with the water up to our ankles, made us feel, to say the least, very uncomfortable. Presently the Captain shouted, "Why in hell—don't you bail the boat out?" At last everything was settled, and by 2 o'clock P. M. we started. The Captain and the negro at the oars. The distance from our starting point to the Maryland shore of the Potomac is nearly sixteen miles. 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This image shows a vertical strip of a document page. The left side is white, representing the paper, and the right side is black, representing the background. There are some visible textures, including a small tear at the top and some faint marks along the edge.







